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Central Intelligence Agency
Office of the Deputy Director for Intelligence

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5 October 1984

NOTE TO: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Attached is the report of a working group we established to review the possible delivery of MIGs to Nicaragua. The group looked at reporting, collection as well as the variety of ways that MIGs could be introduced. We will review this problem on a regular basis.

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Richard J. Kerr
Acting Deputy Director
for Intelligence

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DDI-05730/84 25X1

4 October 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR: Associate Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM: John L. Helgerson
Director of African and Latin American Analysis

SUBJECT: Conclusions of the CIA Working Group Meeting on
the Possible Delivery of MIGs to Nicaragua

1. The CIA Working Group, chaired by the Deputy Division Chief for Central America, ALA, and comprised of representatives from ALA, OIA, OGI, CRES, SOVA, EURA, the NIC, and the Directorate of Operations (see attached) met on 25 September to review recent intelligence reporting on the likelihood of MIG deliveries to Nicaragua.

2. Opinions differed as to the likelihood and timing of MIG deliveries, but consensus was reached that the Nicaraguans have been preparing for the delivery of jet aircraft—including MIGs—and that Moscow would make the final decision as to whether and when they would be deployed. The Soviets appear to be moving cautiously on this issue, and some analysts speculated that Moscow may have been postponing a decision perhaps until Gromyko concluded his meetings last week with senior US officials. Most analysts also believe that if a decision is made to send MIGs they most likely would arrive before, rather than after, the US presidential election.

3. Analysts cited the following as indications the Sandinistas want and have been preparing to receive jet aircraft such as MIGs as part of their overall effort to upgrade military capabilities:

- FSLN public and private declarations, including explicit Sandinista requests for aircraft;
- Several reports of MIG pilot and maintenance training;
- Construction activity at Punta Huete airport;
- The reported presence as early as 1982 of MIGs in Cuba earmarked for Nicaragua; and
- The recent introduction of ground control intercept and other radar that would support jet fighter operations.

4. Some analysts argued, however, that MIGs are not likely to be introduced before the end of this year—if at all—because:

- The Soviets are wary of how the Reagan administration would react.
- Despite their desire for MIGs, the Nicaraguans may be afraid such action would precipitate a hostile US response or even an invasion.

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- Moscow has refused to commit itself to defending the Nicaraguan revolution.
- The L-39 jet trainer aircraft have been sitting in port in Bulgaria for about two months, suggesting that the Soviets may be rethinking that delivery assuming it was intended for Nicaragua in the first place.

5. Others believed the Soviets may deploy MIGs in Nicaragua before the US election is held because:

- Moscow believes relations with the Reagan administration are unlikely to improve and the Soviets would have little to lose from such a confrontation.
- The Soviets might calculate that the presence of the MIGs would provoke President Reagan to order military strikes—an action which in turn could hurt his reelection prospects.
- Recent public statements suggest the Sandinistas are trying to pave the way for MIG deliveries.
- Nicaraguan, Cuban, and Soviet desires to deploy MIGs before the Contadora Treaty would go into effect.

6. Analysts suggested that recent Sandinista statements about acquiring jet aircraft may have been made in order to:

- Press the Soviets to provide MIGs;
- Establish a negotiating position, whereby they can offer not to receive MIGs if the other Contadora participants indicate their acceptance of the current revised draft of the Contadora Treaty;
- Heighten international concern over the danger of war, which could lead to increased pressure on the United States to alter its policies;
- Preempt US objections to their acquisition of less advanced jets such as the Czech-built L-39.

7. Despite some reports to the contrary, the group believes that no MIGs presently are in Nicaragua.

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John L. Helgerson /

This memorandum is classified
in its entirety.

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THE DIRECTOR OF
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

NIC 03750-84
27 June 1984

National Intelligence Council

NOTE FOR: DCI
DDCI

FROM:

A/NIO/LA

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The attached reports raise the possibility that MIGs may be deployed to Nicaragua for the 19 July celebrations of the Sandinista's 5th Anniversary.

-- The Cubans might fly four MIG-21s into Sandino Airfield outside Managua just before the anniversary.

-- The aircraft would participate in an anniversary fly-by and then be left on display near the civilian terminal. This would make it difficult for the US to attack the aircraft.

-- The precedent having been set, once the military airfield at Punta Huete is complete, the MIGs would deploy there and another dozen MIGs would be delivered, perhaps by this October.

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